

Backus Middle School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Backus community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

Backus has seen a 67% five-year enrollment decline and has a current enrollment of 141, making it almost impossible to provide a comprehensive middle school program. Students will be better served by a different middle grade model at another school facility.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

The drastic enrollment decline and small total enrollment made it a candidate for closure. Additionally, Backus as a facility is under 25% capacity, making it a very inefficient school to operate. The facility itself offers little in terms of amenities and requires significant renovation.

3. What other options have been considered?

The planning team considered whether to bring elementary school programs to the Backus facility to locate a PK-8 there instead. Because of the neighborhood enrollment trends, however, it was clear that parents would not choose to send their children to Backus since it would be farther away from their previous neighborhood elementary school. Also, the Taft site offers more amenities and potential for creating a new PK-8 program campus than the Backus site.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships.

Where there are particular curricular programs we will work with schools to support integration of effective programs into the newly consolidated school.

5. What will happen to Fillmore East?

Under this proposal Fillmore East will move to Taft, where it will serve as an anchor for an arts-focused PK-8 school, and continue to serve additional schools in the area providing arts instruction.

6. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Backus currently does not have funding for art, music, or physical education teachers, and only has a part-time librarian – an unacceptable program for middle school students. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

9. How will the proposed new PK-8 grade configuration at Brookland-Bunker Hill, Burroughs-Taft, and other Ward 5 schools be implemented?

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 programs will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward.

Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms. In the case of most Ward 5 schools, PK-8s will grow from elementary schools into PK-8s one grade at a time. For example, Brookland-Bunker Hill will keep its 6th graders in order to add a 7th grade next year and an

8th grade the following year. In the case of Burroughs-Taft, the PK-8 will include an 8th grade in its first year in order to serve the 48 rising 8th graders from Backus.

10. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

11. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

12. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

13. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

14. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While the PK-8 schools will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students.

15. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in all of our PK-8s have the same opportunities as they would in a traditional middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8

schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

16. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

17. Is the receiving school ready for more students?

Backus currently serves 141 students, 83 of whom are currently eighth graders and will therefore be attending high school in the fall. There is ample space at surrounding PK-8 schools to accommodate the 58 rising seventh and eighth graders.

18. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

19. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

20. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain "fixed costs," such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open buildings that severely under-enrolled (Backus is currently at 23% capacity) we are spending that money when the students could easily be accommodated in another building. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Backus, our annual fixed costs are \$808,000.

21. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we propose to institute consistent feeder patterns based on elementary school attendance, and grade configurations that ensure the health of those feeder patterns. In Ward 5 the proposed grade configuration is PK-8. Students would enroll in an elementary school and remain there through the 8th grade. There would be no separate middle schools in Ward 5. Families

will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools, should they prefer a middle school option.

22. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Backus and for students currently living in those boundaries but not attending that school.

	IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
Rising 7 th graders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at neighborhood elementary school (all of which will be adding 7th grades) • Preference in OOB lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at neighborhood elementary school (all of which will be adding 7th grades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference in OOB lottery • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft • Guaranteed spot at neighborhood middle or PK-8 school
Rising 8 th graders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft • Preference in OOB lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft • Preference in OOB lottery • Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood middle school, where applicable

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

23. Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong

academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students. While the overall Backus program cannot be considered high performing, there are partnerships and elements, like the Fillmore East partnership, that we will seek to maintain at the new Burroughs-Taft school.

24. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

At the middle grade level, student safety begins to become a concern, and we will work closely with the Metropolitan Police Department and community leaders to address neighborhood safety concerns that make their way into the school environment. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

25. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

While most students at Backus live within a half mile of the school, these students are older and should not be negatively impacted by the change in walking pattern to Taft, about a mile and a half south on South Dakota avenue. Moreover, the PK-8 model being implemented across Ward 5 as a whole means that fewer students will actually be affected by this change. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets, like South Dakota Avenue, have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

26. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because Backus is a middle school, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

27. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Backus. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the neighborhood students.

28. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will

continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

29. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

30. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

31. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

Bunker Hill Elementary School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Bunker Hill community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

Both Brookland and Bunker Hill met the primary criteria, having seen sharp 5 year enrollment declines and currently having enrollments below the median. By combining the students, a complete program can be offered that incorporates strong elements from each school. The Brookland site was chosen as the ultimate consolidation site because additional programming can take advantage of the new Turkey Thicket recreation center adjacent to Brookland and the nearby Brookland Metro.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Bunker Hill, with a 2006 enrollment of 246, has seen a 42% enrollment decline over the past 5 years. Additionally, the Brookland site offers more long-term amenities, like proximity to Metro and the adjacent field and recreation center.

3. What other options have been considered?

Brookland and Bunker Hill were proposed for consolidation in the Master Facilities Plan. Consolidating Brookland and Bunker Hill as a PK-8 school will offer Bunker Hill students a more comprehensive educational program. The planning team analyzed and considered both site locations, but ultimately decided that the Brookland site was better for the location of a new consolidated school.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a

variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships. Where there are particular curricular programs, such as the Core Knowledge program at Bunker Hill and the technology focus at Brookland, we will work with schools to support integration of effective programs into the newly consolidated school.

5. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Bunker Hill currently does not have funding for music, and only has a part-time librarian and art teacher. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

6. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. How will the proposed PK-8 grade configuration at Brookland-Bunker Hill be implemented?

Brookland-Bunker Hill will “grow into” a PK-8, adding a seventh grade next fall and an eighth grade the following year. There will not be an influx of new students at the middle grades. Specific implementation strategies for the new PK-8 program will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

9. How will the new Reggio-Emilia early childhood program be implemented at Brookland-Bunker Hill?

Implementation strategies for the Reggio-Emilia early childhood program will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of a program will include a clear timeline for phasing in the program, professional development for staff, and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

10. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

11. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

12. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep those teams together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

13. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

14. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While Brookland-Bunker Hill will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students. Brookland-Bunker Hill will also ensure

that, where appropriate, the suitable staff is brought to work with the appropriate age groups.

15. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in Brookland-Bunker Hill have the same opportunities as they would in a regular middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8 schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

16. What is the status of my school's modernization plan?

Design on a new Brookland-Bunker Hill building will begin immediately and be completed in time for the 2010-11 school year. Students will be served at Bunker-Hill in the interim.

17. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

18. Is the receiving school ready for more students?

With fully enrolled classes, Bunker Hill has a capacity of over 550 and currently serves 270 students. There is space to accommodate the 231 current Brookland students during the construction of a new Brookland-Bunker Hill. It is possible that we would need to use demountables for one or both of those two years to accommodate 7th and 8th grades.

19. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

20. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

21. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain “fixed costs,” such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open two buildings that are under-enrolled (Bunker Hill is currently at 53% capacity; Brookland is at 74%) we are spending that money in both of those buildings, when the students could all be accommodated in one. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Bunker Hill, our annual fixed costs are \$618,000.

22. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. In Ward 5 students will attend the same schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Families interested in traditional middle schools may opt to attend such a program out of boundary.

23. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Bunker Hill and Brookland and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Brookland-Bunker Hill PK-7• Preference in OOB lottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Brookland-Bunker Hill PK-7• Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft for grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Brookland-Bunker Hill PK-7• Preference in OOB lottery• Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

24. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

Because both Brookland and Bunker Hill serve elementary students, this issue is not a significant safety concern. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

25. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

Brookland and Bunker Hill are located within a half mile of each other, and many students live within a half mile of both schools. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

26. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Approximately 65% of Brookland students live in-boundary or within a half mile of the school, compared to 49% of Bunker Hill students who live within a half mile of Bunker Hill. Therefore, we believe this decision negatively impacts fewer students than the alternative.

27. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Bunker Hill. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the neighborhood students who will attend Brookland-Bunker Hill.

28. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

29. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

30. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

31. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

Burroughs Elementary School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Burroughs community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

Burroughs is underenrolled, but it has not experienced the more significant enrollment decline in recent years that other programs have experienced. The Burroughs program is proposed to consolidate with Backus and Slowe at Taft as a programmatic decision to benefit the entire community. By growing elementary schools into PK through 8th grade schools, students will go through fewer transitions between schools, increasing educational continuity, improving performance, and encouraging families to remain at DCPS through the middle grades. In areas of the city where housing is less dense, creating PK-8 schools also eliminates parents' concerns about sending middle school students far out of their neighborhoods.

While both the Burroughs and Taft buildings and sites are strong assets, it is not practical to maintain two PK-8s in such close proximity. Taft is better able to accommodate a PK-8, with a separate gym, cafeteria, and auditorium, and separate entrances and wings for early childhood programs and adequate classroom space for the range of fine arts programming Fillmore East will offer. In addition, Taft is adjacent to good field space, offering outdoor program opportunities for students as well.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Burroughs has a small enrollment of only 242 students through grade 6. Additionally, Burroughs is located within 2 blocks of Taft, and 71% of Burroughs students live in-boundary or within a half mile of the school. The facility itself, while historic, cannot offer the full range of amenities needed for a comprehensive PK-8 program.

3. What other options have been considered?

The planning team considered whether to create a new PK-8 program at Burroughs instead. Sufficient space is a concern for a larger program at Burroughs, however, particularly given the needs of a middle grade program, such as a separate gym and auditorium. Taft was considered to be a better site for middle grades, and better able to accommodate and offer more to Burroughs students as they grow into older grades.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The strong leadership at Burroughs has set the program on a positive trajectory, achieving middle states accreditation, introducing a reading lab, and nurturing a strong culture. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in new school environments. In the case of Burroughs the proposal is to relocate the entire program to the Taft building where we can extend the school through the 8th grade, allowing families to stay in this positive environment and bringing more resources to bear.

5. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Burroughs currently does not have funding for a physical education teacher, and only has a part-time librarian, art teacher, and music teacher. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

6. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In the case of the autism classes at Burroughs, we will move students and their teachers as a group to the new site, minimizing change for these students. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. How will the proposed new PK-8 grade configuration at Brookland-Bunker Hill, Burroughs-Taft, and other Ward 5 schools be implemented?

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 programs will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward.

Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms. In the case of most Ward 5 schools, PK-8s will grow from elementary schools into PK-8s one grade at a time. For example, Brookland-Bunker Hill will keep its 6th graders in order to add a 7th grade next year and an 8th grade the following year. In the case of Burroughs-Taft, the PK-8 will include an 8th grade in its first year in order to serve the 48 rising 8th graders from Backus.

9. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

10. How will the new Fine Arts program be implemented at Burroughs-Taft?

The current vision is for Fillmore East to move to Taft as the anchor for a PK-8 arts-focused program. Implementation strategies for the program will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of a program will include a clear timeline for phasing in the program, professional development for staff, and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

11. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

12. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

13. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

14. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While the PK-8 schools will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students.

15. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in all of our PK-8s have the same opportunities as they would in a traditional middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8 schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

16. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

There are several key modifications that will be necessary to welcome elementary students to the Taft building. These include retrofitting some of the bathrooms to accommodate small children, installing playgrounds for early childhood and intermediate grades, and creating pre-K and kindergarten classrooms with bathroom facilities and storage space accessible to small children. The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments regarding the feasibility of completing this work before school begins in August.

17. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

18. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

19. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain “fixed costs,” such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open numerous buildings that are underenrolled, we are spending that money to maintain more buildings than we need. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Burroughs, our annual fixed costs are \$641,000.

20. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. In Ward 5 students will attend the same schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Families interested in traditional middle schools may opt to attend such a program out of boundary.

21. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Burroughs and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
• Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7	• Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7	• Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference in OOB lottery 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference in OOB lottery • Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school
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New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

22. Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students. The leadership and parent community at Burroughs are strong and the program is improving; we will seek to maintain this momentum at the new Burroughs-Taft school for the benefit of even more students.

23. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

At the middle grade level, student safety begins to become a concern, and we will work closely with the Metropolitan Police Department and community leaders to address neighborhood safety concerns that make their way into the school environment. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

24. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

Burroughs is located 2 blocks from Taft. The administration already has begun conversations with both the Metropolitan Police Department and the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that the walk to school, particularly around Taft park, are clean and safe for children to travel through. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the

Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

25. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because of the close proximity to the new school site, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

26. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Burroughs. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the neighborhood students who will attend Burroughs-Taft.

27. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

28. Will the students affected by these closing be exempt from future closings?

Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

29. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

30. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with

this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

Slowe Elementary School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Slowe community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

Slowe has seen a 64% enrollment decline over five years and has a current enrollment of 83, a population that is far too small to support a comprehensive program. Proximity to Noyes, a new facility that is under capacity, Burroughs-Taft, and Langdon allows students to maintain walkability within a half mile of their homes. The Slowe facility is too small to be a viable option for a PK-8 school.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Slowe has experienced a drastic enrollment decline and is unsustainable as a neighborhood elementary school. Slowe is located near several other neighborhood elementary schools that can offer stronger programs and more amenities for students.

3. What other options have been considered?

The planning team considered where the best location would be for a new PK-8 school that would receive Slowe students. Because of Slowe's small size, it was not considered a viable option to keep open.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in new school environments.

5. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Slowe currently does not have funding for art, music, or physical education teachers, and only has a part-time librarian. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

6. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. How will the proposed new PK-8 grade configuration at Burroughs-Taft, Langdon, and other Ward 5 schools be implemented?

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 programs will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward.

Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms. In the case of most Ward 5 schools, PK-8s will grow from elementary schools into PK-8s one grade at a time. For example, Brookland-Bunker Hill will keep its 6th graders in order to add a 7th grade next year and an 8th grade the following year. In the case of Burroughs-Taft, the PK-8 will include an 8th grade in its first year in order to serve the 48 rising 8th graders from Backus.

9. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

10. How will the new Fine Arts program be implemented at Burroughs-Taft?

The current vision is for Fillmore East to move to Taft as the anchor for a PK-8 arts-focused program. Implementation strategies for the program will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of a program will include a clear timeline for phasing in the program, professional development for staff, and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

11. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

12. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

13. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

14. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While the PK-8 schools will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students.

15. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in all of our PK-8s have the same opportunities as they would in a traditional middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8

schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

16. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

There are several key modifications that will be necessary to welcome elementary students to the Taft building. These include retrofitting some of the bathrooms to accommodate small children, installing playgrounds for early childhood and intermediate grades, and creating pre-K and kindergarten classrooms with bathroom facilities and storage space accessible to small children. The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments regarding the feasibility of completing this work before school begins in August.

17. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

18. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

19. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain “fixed costs,” such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open numerous buildings that are underenrolled, (Slowe is at 18% capacity, Burroughs at 51%, Noyes at 70%), we are spending that money when the students could easily be accommodated in another building. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Slowe, our annual fixed costs are \$575,000.

20. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary

schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. In Ward 5 students will attend the same schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Families interested in traditional middle schools may opt to attend such a program out of boundary.

21. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Slowe and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7 or Noyes • Preference in OOB lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Burroughs-Taft PK-7 or Noyes • Preference in OOB lottery • Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

22. Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high

performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students.

23. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

At the middle grade level, student safety begins to become a concern, and we will work closely with the Metropolitan Police Department and community leaders to address neighborhood safety concerns that make their way into the school environment. We are aware of concerns involving the mixing of Slowe students with students from surrounding areas, and we will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

24. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family - we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

Slowe is located just over a half mile from Taft, through a heavily residential area. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

25. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because of the close proximity to other neighborhood elementary schools for Slowe students, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

26. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Slowe. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the neighborhood students who will attend Burroughs-Taft, Noyes, or Langdon.

27. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

28. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little

disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

29. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

30. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

J.F. Cook Elementary School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Cook community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

J.F. Cook met the primary criteria and, though it is in a high-growth cluster, is within a half mile of three under-enrolled DCPS programs serving the same grade levels. With a current enrollment of 184, it is unable to support a comprehensive program. Moving these students to the nearby schools will provide much more comprehensive academic programs to current J.F. Cook students.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

J.F. Cook has experienced a 22% enrollment decline over the past 5 years and is too small to support a comprehensive elementary school program. The facility itself offers little in terms of amenities, has no green space, and requires significant renovation. Several nearby elementary schools, including Walker-Jones (under new construction), Emery (linked with the McKinley campus), and Montgomery offer better opportunities for students and will benefit from increased enrollment.

3. What other options have been considered?

Several elementary schools in the areas have seen significant enrollment decline, including Emery, Montgomery, and J.F. Cook. The planning team considered various options for consolidating programs in order to offer students a more comprehensive educational program.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also

spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships. Where there are particular curricular programs we will work with schools to support integration of effective programs into the newly consolidated school.

5. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Cook currently does not have funding for a physical education teacher, and only has a part-time art teacher. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

6. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. How will the proposed new PK-8 grade configuration at Emery and other Ward 5 schools be implemented?

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 programs will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward.

Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms. In the case of most Ward 5 schools, PK-8s will grow from elementary schools into PK-8s one grade at a time. For example, Emery will keep its 6th graders in order to add a 7th grade next year and an 8th grade the following year. In the case of Burroughs-Taft, the PK-8 will include an 8th grade in its first year in order to serve the 48 rising 8th graders from Backus.

9. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

10. How will the new STEM program be implemented at Emery?

The current vision is for Emery to develop a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) focus as a PK-8 that works collaboratively with McKinley Tech. Implementation strategies for the program will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of a program will include a clear timeline for phasing in the program, professional development for staff, and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

11. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

12. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

13. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

14. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While the PK-8 schools will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students.

15. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in all of our PK-8s have the same opportunities as they would in a traditional middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8 schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

16. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

17. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

18. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

19. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain "fixed costs," such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open numerous buildings that are underenrolled, (J.F. Cook is at 71% capacity, Emery is at 43%) we are spending that money when the students could easily be accommodated in fewer buildings. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Cook, our annual fixed costs are \$489,000.

20. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-

boundary schools. In Ward 5 students will attend the same schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Families interested in traditional middle schools may opt to attend such a program out of boundary.

21. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Cook and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Walker-Jones or Emery• Preference in OOB lottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Walker-Jones or Emery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Walker-Jones or Emery• Preference in OOB lottery• Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

22. Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students.

23. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

Because J.F. Cook serves elementary school students, this issue is not a significant safety concern. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

24. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

There are several nearby neighborhood elementary school options for parents. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets, like North Capitol Street, have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

25. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because of the close proximity to other neighborhood schools, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

26. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from J.F. Cook. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the neighborhood students.

27. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

28. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

29. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for

school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

30. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

Young Elementary and Browne Middle School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Young and Browne communities have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why these schools?

Both Young and Browne have experienced a significant enrollment decline, leaving Browne seriously under capacity. By combining Young and Browne into a PreK-8th grade school, students will go through fewer transitions between schools and there will be no influx of new students at the middle grades. The consolidation of Browne and Young preserves walkability for the elementary students and better uses the space in the receiving building.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Young has lost 29% of its enrollment over the past 5 years, while Browne has lost 27%. Browne currently is utilizing only 25% of its facility space. The Browne facility has the space to accommodate a full PK-8 program. Both facilities are located on the Hilltop campus and offer tremendous opportunity for innovative programming with the new Phelps Career Technical Education High School scheduled to open in 2008-09 and Spingarn, as well as substantial green space. Both buildings are in need of renovation.

3. What other options have been considered?

Young and Browne do not have the student populations to sustain separate facility programs. With the decision to implement a PK-8 grade configuration in Ward 5, consolidation of Browne and Young into a single program was immediately an attractive and sensible option. We anticipate additional students attending Browne-Young due to the closure of Gibbs Elementary and Hine Middle School in Ward 6, supporting the need to create a quality, consolidated program on the Browne-Young campus.

4. What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships. Where there are particular curricular programs we will work with schools to support integration of effective programs into the newly consolidated school.

5. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Young currently does not have funding for art, music, or physical education teachers, and only has a part-time librarian. Browne only has a full-time physical education teacher and a part-time librarian. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

6. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In the case of the special education center at Browne, we will continue to work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. How will the proposed new PK-8 grade configurations at Browne-Young be implemented?

In the case of a consolidation of Browne and Young, Young's current 6th grade students would stay at the combined school for their seventh grade year; the 95 rising eighth graders currently at Browne would round out the PK-8. As a PK-8, Browne-Young would not be fed by any other schools at the middle school level.

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 programs will be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

9. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

10. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

11. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

12. How will it work to have younger children in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

13. Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While the PK-8 schools will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students.

14. Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in all of our PK-8s have the same opportunities as they would in a traditional middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8 schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

15. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

There are several key modifications that will be necessary to welcome elementary students to the Browne building. These include retrofitting some of the bathrooms to accommodate small children, installing playgrounds for early childhood and intermediate grades, and creating pre-K and kindergarten classrooms with bathroom facilities and storage space accessible to small children. The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments regarding the feasibility of completing this work before school begins in August.

16. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

17. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

18. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain "fixed costs," such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open numerous buildings that are underenrolled, we are spending that money to maintain more buildings than we need. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Young (which is at 64% capacity), our annual fixed costs are \$745,000. In the case of Browne (which is at 25% capacity), the fixed costs are \$1,114,000.

19. How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. In Ward 5 students will attend the same schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. Families interested in traditional middle schools may opt to attend such a program out of boundary.

20. How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Burroughs and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Browne-Young PK-8• Preference in OOB lottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Browne-Young PK-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Browne-Young PK-8• Preference in OOB lottery• Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

21. Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong

academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students.

22. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

At the middle grade level, student safety begins to become a concern, and we will work closely with the Metropolitan Police Department and community leaders to address neighborhood safety concerns that make their way into the school environment. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

23. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because there is no measurable change in the location of the schools, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

24. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

25. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

26. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity

for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

27. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

M. M. Washington High School and Special Education Center

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the M. M. Washington community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

1. Why this school?

Specialty senior high schools have seen an average 7% increase in enrollment over five years, while M. M. Washington has experienced a 20% decrease, leaving it with a below median student population as well. We believe the CTE students can be better served in more vibrant programs at other senior high schools. Movement of the special education program reflects a district-wide priority to phase out stand-alone special education centers that do not allow for appropriate inclusion.

2. What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

M.M. Washington's steadily declining and low enrollment made it a candidate for closure. Additionally, the M.M. Washington facility itself offers little in terms of amenities, no green space, and requires significant renovation.

3. What other options have been considered?

The planning team considered the overall impact of closing the program at M.M. Washington, including what other CTE options exist throughout the system. We determined that with new programs at Cardozo and Roosevelt, as well as the new Phelps opening up next school year, that students would have better options in more robust programs at other schools.

4. How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, M.M. Washington currently does not have funding for art or physical education teachers, and only

has a part-time librarian. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

5. What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

In the case of the M.M. Washington Center, students would relocate across three other high school sites, forming two to three classes at each site. These classrooms would be located in close proximity to each other, and students would also have access to additional rooms for therapy sessions and behavior management. Office space would be provided for the instructor. We will place a greater emphasis on academics with professional development for all staff. We will offer students specifically selected curriculum resources and added vocational /career transition supports. Comprehensive Staffing will reflect positive behavioral interventions training and a therapeutic milieu maintained within classrooms. There will also be significantly more opportunity for inclusion in general education classes and activities, as appropriate for the individual student.

6. Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

7. How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

8. Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

9. What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

10. What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

11. What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

12. What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

13. How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain "fixed costs," such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open buildings when those students could easily be accommodated in another building with excess space, that means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of M. M. Washington, our annual fixed costs are \$723,000.

14. How will this affect my school assignment?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim assignment policy. In the case of students at the Washington Center, teachers and administrators will work with families to reassign classrooms of students to other high schools, where they will have more opportunity for inclusion in general education, as appropriate.

Students in the M. M. Washington CTE program will have the option of moving to other high schools that provide relevant CTE offerings. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school.

15. How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

Because M.M. Washington is a citywide school, neighborhood issues are not considered a specific safety concern. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

16. This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

The vast majority of M.M. Washington students live more than ½ mile from the school. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

17. Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. As a citywide high school, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis for M.M. Washington.

18. Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from M.M. Washington.

19. Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

20. Will the students affected by these closings be exempt from future closings? Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

21. Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

22. How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.